The total number of workers involved in sick industrial units registered with the Board (excluding those dismissed as non-maintainable) is 11,83,432. The total networth of these companies is Rs. 8,981 crore.

(g) Government has taken a number of steps for revival of industrial sickness which, inter-alia, include, guidelines of Reserve Bank of India to banks, amalgamation of sick units with healthy units, setting up of Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction under Sick Industrial Companies (Special provisions) Act, National Renewal Fund, National Equity Fund, etc.

[English]

Strategy for Industrial Growth

*257. SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA:

SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether concerned over the decline in the industrial growth, he has begun a series of meetings with various sector specific groups to evolve a strategy for revitalising the growth;

(b) if so, whether he has already completed discussions with the representatives of paper and cement industry;

(c) if so, the main problems pointed out by these representatives;

(d) the extent to which the Government have agreed to provide assistance to industries to overcome the difficulties; and

(e) to what extent this type of exercise has helped the Government as well as the industry in improving the industrial production?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The main problems pointed out by the cement industry included high incidence of tax, infrastructural constraints as well as the problem of compulsory jute package order. In case of paper, the main problems indicated were inadequate availability of raw materials, technological obsolence, infrastructural constraints and dumping by foreign suppliers. Ministry of Industry has taken up some of these issues with the concerned Ministries.

(e) Government-industry inter-action facilitates improved production.

Modernisation of Handloom Sector

*258. DR. ASIM BALA:

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have prepared any plan for modernisation of handloom sector during 1997-98;

(b) if so, the details of the project package scheme prepared for the purpose;

(c) by when the scheme is likely to be implemented; and

(d) the details of the additional incentives likely to be provided to handloom weavers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) Modernisation of Handloom Sector is a continuous process. The Government have been taking a number of measures through various ongoing Schemes to modernise the sector.

(b) The Project Package Scheme, which has been modified recently, envisages, inter-alia, requisite assistance for provision of new/modern looms, modernisation of obsolete looms, conversion of existing looms to commercial/improved looms, provision of accessories & product adaptation/development.

(c) The Project Package Scheme has been continued during 1997-98.

(d) The additional incentives under the new Project Package Scheme are for requisite support in regard to modernisation of looms/accessories, provision of inputs and infrastructure development to augment production and marketing.

Amendment in Contract Act

*259. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Amendments in contract Act flayed", appearing in the Hindustan Times dated May 31st, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the corrective measures proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that industrial and trading activities are not adversely affected as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Some representations have been received against the amendment undertaken in the Indian Contract Act, 1872. These would be examined and the corrective measures will be taken if considered necessary.

Asian Development Bank Assistance

*260. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's infrastructure development in the